

# The IDVA Update

## Veterans Day at the State Fair

There had not been a veterans day at the State Fair in more than fifty years. But this year Veterans Day at the Fair was a great success. All the veterans' organizations were represented at tables around the interior of the senior citizens building. The VA regional office was there, Roudebush VA Medical Center provided free medical screenings all day long, and a WWII re-enactors group had a long table set up with WWII memorabilia including small arms, tools, and uniform items.

During the ceremonies Major General Bob Mitchell, Adjutant General of the State of Indiana, presented a painting to Bill Jackson, Director of Veterans Affairs. The painting titled "Wide Awake" depicts members of Company D (Ranger) 151<sup>st</sup> Infantry, Indiana National Guard, conducting Long Range Patrol missions as part of 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Force in Vietnam, 1968 –1969. Several members of Company D attended the event.



The theme for the day was set by Medal of Honor recipient Sammy Davis in his remarks, "the most important thing we did over there was to take care of each other, and we need to remember that the most important thing we have to do today is to take care of each other."



From Left: Bill Jackson, Lt Gov. Joe Kernan, Sammy L. Davis, Mel Biddle

The highlights of the day included a fly over by 3, F16 Falcons, from the 181<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, Indiana Air National Guard flying out of Terre Haute, followed by remarks from Lt Governor Joe Kernan, a former US Navy pilot, Vietnam Veteran and POW and two Medal of Honor recipients Mel Biddle, and Sammy L. Davis, both of whom served in the US Army.

Mr. Biddle earned his Medal in action near Soy, Belgium, December 23 and 24, 1944, when his single handed actions for a 20 hour period, including personally eliminating 3 enemy snipers and 4 enemy machine gun nests, enabled his battalion to take the town of Hotton from the German Army with a minimum of US casualties. Mr. Davis earned his Medal near

Cai Lay, Vietnam, 18 November 1967 where, in defending his fire base from attack, he ignored the wounds he received, continued to fire his artillery piece after the rest of the crew had been eliminated until the gun was destroyed by enemy fire. Then, crossing a river that bordered the firebase, under enemy fire rescued 3 wounded comrades. Upon returning he continued to fight with a second gun crew until the enemy broke off the attack.

### INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD SIGNS APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT

Ken McIntosh



From left: Mr. John Delgado, U. S. Department of Labor, Maj. Gen Robert J. Mitchell, and Director Bill Jackson

Through the efforts of William D. Jackson, Director, Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs, Major General Robert Mitchell, Adjutant General of Indiana, and Colonel James L. Irwin, AUS-Ret, Executive Director for Joint Operations, Indiana National Guard, an apprenticeship program has been approved and implemented for the Indiana National Guard.

Called the Indiana Military Apprenticeship Program (IN.MAP), this program is the first in the country approved and registered by the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (DOL/BAT). A ceremony was held at Stout Field to officially enroll National Guard personnel into the

registered program. Initial programs approved include: Diesel Mechanics; Electronics Technician; Electronics Mechanics; Automated Logistics Engineer (Purchasing Agent); Counselor; Machinist; Sheet Metal Worker; Truck Driver (Heavy); Welder (Combination); Upholsterer (Canvas Worker); Ordnance Artificer; and, Auto/Truck Body Repairer.

Additional programs will be approved and additional locations will be added.

The State Approving Agency, working closely with John Delgado, Indiana State Director of the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, Department of Labor (DOL/BAT), recently approved all currently approved DOL/BAT programs within the IN.MAP. This approval action will allow veterans with GI Bill eligibility the opportunity to use their educational benefits while enrolled in this training program. This is also the first National Guard program approved by a State Approving Agency within the United States.

For additional information about this program and to determine eligibility, please phone the Education Office, Indiana National Guard, Warrant Officer R. B. Barney at Stout Field, 317-247-3300 extension 4346.

### New Medication Co-Pay Regulations Published in Federal Register

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs press Release

WASHINGTON — A proposed Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulation that will increase the co-payment some veterans make for outpatient prescriptions was published in the *Federal Register* today.

For the past decade, veterans have paid \$2 for each 30-day supply of medication furnished on an outpatient basis for treatment

of a non-service-connected condition. This will increase to \$7, with a maximum annual out-of-pocket payment of \$840 for veterans in certain enrollment categories.

In 1990 VA spent \$715 million for pharmaceuticals. While co-payments remained the same during the next 10 years, the cost for medicines rose to \$2.1 billion in 2000. Under the new regulation co-payments could increase with inflation, along with caps, based on the Prescription Drug portion of the Consumer Price Index.

Certain veterans currently do not have to make medication co-payments and the proposed regulation would not change that. The following veterans are exempt from the regulations proposed today:

- Veterans who have a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or more,
- Veterans who are receiving medication for a service-connected disability,
- Veterans with incomes below the maximum amount of VA pensions,
- And a limited number of other veterans exempt by public law.

During fiscal year 2000, 1.1 million veterans received medication from VA, averaging 47 prescriptions (30-day supply) each. VA collected \$101 million in fiscal year 2000 for medication co-pays. It is anticipated that the same number of veterans will continue to use VA at the new co-payment rate, generating an increase in payments of \$250 million annually. Every dollar collected will be returned to the VA facility where the veteran received medical care.

VA believes that the proposed \$7 medication co-payment would be lower than or equal to most medication co-payments charged

by the private health care industry. The purpose of the annual cap is to help eliminate financial hardships for veterans who in unusual circumstances need a significant number of prescriptions. The cap is based on a veteran who averages more than 10 prescriptions a month.

The co-payment cap would not apply to veterans in priority category 7. Congress has determined that these veterans have sufficient resources to pay for VA inpatient and outpatient care.

Veterans and other interested parties have 60 days to submit comments to: Director, Office of Regulations Management (02D), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20420; or fax comments to (202) 273-9289; or email to [OGCRegulations@mail.va.gov](mailto:OGCRegulations@mail.va.gov).



## Put a Face with a Name

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and Kinko's have teamed up to put faces with the 58,226 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington D.C. by posting photographs of the individuals to the web site The Virtual Wall ([thevirtualwall.org](http://thevirtualwall.org)). The Virtual Wall is the on line extension of the literal Wall in D.C.

From September 12, 2001, through Veterans Day, November 11, 2001, Kinko's will provide

scanners, computers and technical assistance to scan and upload these photographs free of charge.

Those who have the technical expertise and necessary equipment can scan the image along with the name, rank and service information of your loved one and post that to:

thevirtualwall.org,

The Virtual wall will verify the data, add the panel and row numbers and place the image appropriately.

Note that if the image you are scanning is the copyright protected work of a professional photographer you must obtain the permission of the copyright holder prior to posting the image. Kinko's is offering help with that process; please call them at 1-800-9kinkos, ext. 3154, photo's made by family and friends do not present copyright issues.



## Golf Equipment for the Troops on the DMZ

While on a trade mission to Korea in November 1999, Lt. Governor Joe Kernan took the opportunity to visit American troops in the Joint Security Area (JSA) in Panmunjom. While there he discovered that, as is so often the case, there isn't much in the way of

recreational activities for soldiers on the pointy end of the spear. In fact, about all that is available to these guys is a one-hole 192 yard par 3 golf course smack in the middle of a mine field. One does not go into the rough to retrieve a badly hit ball. This "course" has been called the most dangerous golf hole in the world.

The trouble was the men had one set of clubs, on loan from Major Dana Foley who was also serving there at the time, and they were getting beat up badly.

So when he got home, Kernan, a Vietnam vet and former POW, got together with Hoosier connected golf companies and got them to donate a pile of equipment that was sent to the DMZ and is shown in the photo with some of the troops who will benefit from it.

Indiana State Senator Allie Cracraft, a Korean War vet who was also part of the trade mission said, "As one who served in Korea, more than 5,000 miles from home I can imagine what this gift will mean to the soldiers. The men and women serving now and in the future will surely be very grateful."

Major Foley, who has since returned to the States and retired from the Army said, "Lt. Governor Kernan and the business that contributed to this project may think this is a small gesture, but they will never know how much it means to the soldiers in Korea. Thank you."

The Lt. Governor paid special tribute to Skip Strzelecki and St. Andrews Products in Michigan City. "Skip came through with some very high quality golf equipment, and we couldn't have done it without him."

The companies who contributed were

Ameritech Indiana

Cinergy/PSI  
 The Cook Group  
 Vectren Corporation  
 NiSource  
 American United Life  
 Gurley-Leep Automotive Group  
 Hoosier Energy  
 Indiana Gas Association  
 American Electric Power  
 St. Andrews Products

The golf equipment they sent to the soldiers includes:

144	caps
144	golf shirts
500	bag tags
75 dozen	balls
20,000	imprinted tees
8 sets	8 irons and 3 woods
16	putters
15	#5 irons
15	#7 irons
15	#9 irons
11	pitching wedges
11	sand wedges
50 dozen	Cayman Island golf balls

### **Treasury to Collect Delinquent Debts from IRS Rebate Check**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Press Release

WASHINGTON -- The Treasury Department will send letters to about 380,000 veterans to remind them that they owe the federal government, and that money can be withheld from their Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rebate checks this summer.

The rebates are a result of President Bush's tax-cut bill and will be mailed during a 10-week period starting July 23.

Federal law says that when veterans, their dependents or survivors owe more than \$25 to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the debts are more than 180 days overdue, VA officials must report the debts to the Treasury for possible offset from most government payments.

From January 1 through June 22, VA referred more than 314,000 health care debts and more than 71,000 benefit debts (education, home loans, etc.) to the Treasury. The combined amount owed is approximately \$184 million.

The Treasury Department will notify veterans in writing about anticipated deductions. The letters will include the name of the VA agency that is owed money and a point of contact who will answer questions about their debt.

VA has already mailed letters to each beneficiary notifying him or her of an outstanding debt and the possible referral of the debt to the Treasury Department for collection. The VA letter also provided a toll-free number for making payment arrangements to avoid further action. Those who did not pay their debts were referred to the Treasury Department.

For additional information, see the Treasury Department's web site at <http://fms.treas.gov/news/factsheets/taxpayments.html>.

### **Non-VA Emergency Care Covered for Some Veterans**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Press Release

WASHINGTON -- A major improvement in providing emergency care to some uninsured veterans recently took effect. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will begin reimbursing non-VA hospitals for emergency

services provided to eligible veterans who have no other means of payment.

The emergency care benefit does not apply to all veterans.

To qualify, veterans must:

- Be enrolled in VA health care;
- Have been seen by a VA health care professional within 24 months;
- Carry no other form of health insurance, including Medicare or Medicaid.
- If any third party pays all or part of the bill, VA cannot provide reimbursement.
- 

"This benefit will ease a financial burden for veterans who have no other health insurance to fall back on," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "However, it is strictly for emergency care -- when it is obvious that a delay in medical treatment would be hazardous to the veteran's health -- and when no other VA or federal facility is available."

When these conditions are met, the veteran pays nothing. VA pays 70 percent of the applicable Medicare rate and VA payment is considered payment in full. VA will pay for private-sector emergency care only until the veteran can be safely transported to a VA facility.

The emergency care benefit has been in effect since May 29, 2000. However, VA did not have the legal authority to pay private emergency rooms or reimburse veterans for non-VA emergency care until recently. VA soon will begin processing past claims. Hospitals and veterans should see their reimbursement checks in the near future.

Under the new rules, civilian hospitals should report to VA within 48 hours of treating a veteran who has no other means of payment. Usually, the facility will file for reimbursement. If the non-VA facility bills the veteran directly, the veteran should contact his or her local VA health care facility and a representative will assist in resolving the issue. VA will reimburse health care providers for all medical services necessary to stabilize the veteran's condition so the patient can be transferred to an approved VA facility. If the veteran chooses to stay beyond that point, the patient will be responsible for payment of costs associated with the additional treatment. Veterans will be able to appeal a claim if VA denies payment for any reason. Veterans previously covered by VA for emergency services will not be affected by the new regulation.

"This benefit is a safety net for enrolled veterans who have no other means of paying an emergency bill," said VA's Under Secretary for Health Dr. Thomas L. Garthwaite. "I highly encourage veterans to keep their insurance. Spouses generally do not qualify for VA health care and could be left uninsured. Furthermore, if a veteran is covered by Medicare Part B and decides to cancel it, it cannot be reinstated until January of the next year."

For more information about the emergency care benefits contact the nearest VA health care facility or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

## Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Grandfathering Clarification

From: "What Every Veteran Should Know"

A two-tier system for SBP was passed by P.L. 99-145 effective March 1, 1986. All military personnel who are retirement eligible after October 1, 1985, are under this two-tier SBP

system. However, current retirees, current SBP beneficiaries and military personnel who were retirement eligible on or before October 1, 1985, also are affected by the two-tier SBP system.

Title VII of P.L. 99-145 in effect establishes only one SBP annuity, and that annuity is computed by utilizing the two-tier system (55 percent of the base amount until age 62 and 35 percent thereafter). However, the original SBP law (P.L. 92-425) enacted on September 21, 1972, established an SBP annuity based solely on 55 percent of the base amount (together with any Social Security offset applicable). Many retirees are enrolled in the SBP program under the provisions of the original SBP law. The basic question is: Will the SBP annuity for these retirees be paid under the provisions of the original SBP law or the two-tier system?

For military personnel who were retirement eligible on or before October 1, 1985, and their future survivors, or military personnel retired on or before October 1, 1985, and their future survivors and current beneficiaries, "grandfathering" of their SBP annuity will apply if the survivor or beneficiaries would have been subject to the provisions of the Social Security offset. Under grandfathering, surviving (or current beneficiaries) will receive the annuity most financially favorable to them, either under the law as it was before March 1, 1986, or the new two-tier system. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service Center (DFAS) will compute this after the retiree's death.

### **Regional Veterans Service Liaison Office**

Source: VA Fact Sheet

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has established a new function within its Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. This

function is called the Regional Veterans Service Organization Liaison Staff and its role is to address the needs and concerns of veterans service organizations at the State and local levels nationwide.

The Regional Veterans Service Organization Liaison Staff will be located in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, a component of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. The office will consist of a regional veterans service liaison coordinator, six regional liaisons and one program support assistant. The liaisons will be stationed throughout the Nation in regions developed according to veteran population and geographical areas. They will report directly to the coordinator in the VA central office.

The regional veterans service office liaisons will develop and enhance partnerships with the State and local veterans service organizations, and the State Directors of Veterans Affairs, attending conventions, meetings and other functions in order to provide an effective communication channel for the Department with these groups. The liaisons will also be responsible for developing and facilitating outreach activities to inform the veteran population and the general public in their regions of the various programs, initiatives and goals of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This new structure and process will bring VA closer to the pulse of the veteran community.

### **Far Reaching VHA Study to Examine PTSD Treatment for Military Women**

A five-year nationwide psychotherapy research study, "Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Treatment of PTSD in Women," is probably the largest study of its kind. Sponsored by the VA Cooperative Studies Program, and also

supported by the Department of Defense (DOD), the study will begin on July 1, 2001, and will focus on military women.

While the research uses a multi-site approach for gathering data, the results are intended to be widely applicable to clinicians, researchers and policymakers in the United States and internationally. The study findings will be used to identify the best treatment methods and future research approaches for patients with PTSD. The study will incorporate data from 12 U.S. sites and will include 48 therapists and 384 patients.

Approximately 8 to 10 percent of military women, both active duty and veteran, are considered to be affected by PTSD. They are more than twice as likely to develop the disorder as the average American man. Nevertheless, previous PTSD research studies have tended to overlook women.

Paula Schnurr, Deputy Director, and Matthew Friedman, Director, of the VA National Center for PTSD at the White River Junction, Vermont, VA Medical and Regional Office Center, are leading the study. They are Professors of Psychiatry at Dartmouth Medical School, and their DOD colleague, Lt. Col. Charles Engel, is Chief, Deployment Health Clinical Center at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

**IDVA Fall Conference  
Stout Field  
Indiana National  
Guard  
Auditorium  
October 4, 2001**

## Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery Update

Progress toward cemetery construction is rapidly gaining momentum. Bids were opened and reviewed on August 7 by the Indiana Department of Public Works, Axis Architecture (the architect), and the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs. The winning bidder was found to be within the budgeted contract amount, and they have notified Public Works that their bid was valid. A request for a grant increase was prepared and submitted to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC, by IDVA. Their approval/notification process is estimated to take about one month. At the same time, the Indiana Department of Public Works is drafting and coordinating the contract within state agencies, and the contract is expected to be ready for signature when the federal VA notifies us of their approval of the grant increase. The actual contract signing will be accomplished in one day if all required parties are available. We expect to have a signed contract with the winning bidder not later than the end of September.

The installation of an additional 1,174 grave liners in sections 2 and 3 was completed in June.

William Jackson	317-232-3922
Stephen Steed	317-232-3165
Jon Brinkley	317-232-3919
Jim Kiser	317-232-3921
Judy Holgate	317-232-3922
Ken McIntosh	317-232-3916
John Piper III	317-232-3914
Beverly Inman	317-232-3917
Marcia Hines	317-232-3910